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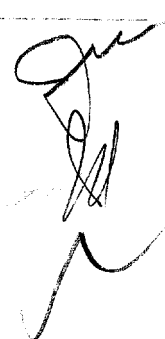
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*Press Item for the DCI**Legco*

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(ABM)

WASHINGTON--SEN. JOHN C. STENNIS, D-MISS., SAID TODAY THE SOVIET UNION MAY HAVE BY THE MID-1970'S A SERIOUS AND PERHAPS DEADLY THREAT TO "OUR VERY SURVIVAL."

STENNIS, CHAIRMAN OF THE SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE, MADE A POWERFUL PLEA TO THE SENATE FOR APPROVAL OF THE SAFEGUARD ANTI-BALLISTIC MISSILE SYSTEM. HE SAID THE SOVIET UNION NOW HAS ENOUGH BALLISTIC MISSILE LAUNCHERS EITHER DEPLOYED OR UNDER CONSTRUCTION "WHICH, WITH QUALITATIVE IMPROVEMENTS, COULD POSE A SERIOUS AND PERHAPS DEADLY TREAT TO OUR MINUTEMAN DETERRENT IN THE MID-1970'S.

"OUR VERY SURVIVAL MAY HINGE ON THE DECISION WE MAKE ON SAFEGUARD THIS YEAR," HE SAID IN REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY TO THE SENATE.

STENNIS SAID THE THREAT TO THE NATION'S LAND BASED MISSILE FORCE IS REAL AND GROWING. HE SAID THE SOVIETS HAVE DEPLOYED OR STARTED CONSTRUCTION ON ABOUT 300 MONSTER SS9 MISSILES WITH A CAPABILITY OF DESTROYING HARDENED MISSILE SILOS EITHER SINGLY OR WITH TRIPLE WARHEADS.

IN ADDITION HE SAID THE SOVIETS HAVE MORE THAN 800 SMALLER SS11 MISSILES IN OPERATION OR UNDER CONSTRUCTION AND HE WARNED THAT IMPROVEMENTS IN THE SS11 COULD ALSO GIVE IT A KILL CAPABILITY AGAINST U.S. MISSILE SILOS.

STENNIS SAID THAT TO DEFEAT SAFEGUARD EXPANSION IN THE SENATE "WOULD BE THE WORST POSSIBLE SETBACK THAT WE COULD HAND TO THE STRATEGIC ARMS LIMITATIONS TALKS IN VIENNA."

HE SAID IT WOULD DEFEAT ALL CHANCES FOR SUCCESS AT THE U.S.-SOVIET NEGOTIATIONS "BECAUSE IT WOULD CLEARLY JERK THE RUG OUT FROM UNDER OUR PRESIDENT JUST WHEN A STRATEGIC ARMS LIMITATIONS AGREEMENT SEEMS POSSIBLE."

7/30--GE1210P

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These comments represent the initial and tentative reaction of the Office of Current Intelligence to the attached item from the news services.